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One Hundred Years Ago, On November 4, 1839, The Dane (Later Christian) County Circuit Court, An Important Point On The Lincoln Circuit, Convened At Taylorville For The First Time.

Old Christian County Court House At Taylorville

TAYLORVILLE
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ILL.

Dr. Louis A. Warren

Lincoln National Life
Foundation

Fort Wayne Indiana

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The spirit of antiquity enshrined
Wordsworth

WHEN the first term of the Christian County Circuit Court was held, every county in the Eighth Judicial District had experienced the rare thrill of court week. During court sessions, the little county towns buzzed with unusual activity. Farmers took this opportunity to set in provisions and listen to a case or two, and in the larger towns, hawkers often tarried, selling their wares to the resident and transient gentry. Court week was to the pioneers what Fair week is to us moderns.

Christian County was established on February 15, 1839 under the name of Dane County. The name Dane didn't 'take' however, and in the following year it was changed to Christian, after a county in Kentucky bearing the same name. Taylorville was designated as the county seat because of its favorable geographic location. No court house was provided for the first circuit court, but in the following year a frame building was erected and served the county for almost a score of years. It stood on pillars, a few feet above the ground, and the space beneath became a cool rendezvous for hogs, whose grunts and squeals added humor to court week, though the dignity of the court must have suffered. There is a tradition about Lincoln asking the court to

remove the hogs so that his pleadings could be heard by the jury.

Lincoln's practice at Christian Court was evidently large and it would appear that he seldom missed an opportunity to present himself here, as long as it remained a part of the Eighth District. Close to Springfield and fairly well populated, it offered an opening Lincoln would not be likely to ignore.

The frame court house, the first in the county's history, still stands in the outskirts of Taylorville, somewhat changed from its original appearance. It is used as a warehouse, but its Lincoln connection has given it prestige that finer houses in Taylorville lack.

The familiar Lincoln Circuit Marker in the present square in Taylorville is a mute but effective reminder of Lincoln's frequent visits here.

THEODORE S. CHARRNEY

The cachet symbolic of this event is the Old Christian County Court House that stills stands at Taylorville. It was in use as a Court House from 1840 until 1856. Prepared by THE POOR RICHARD PRESS, 5053 Montana Street, Chicago, Illinois.

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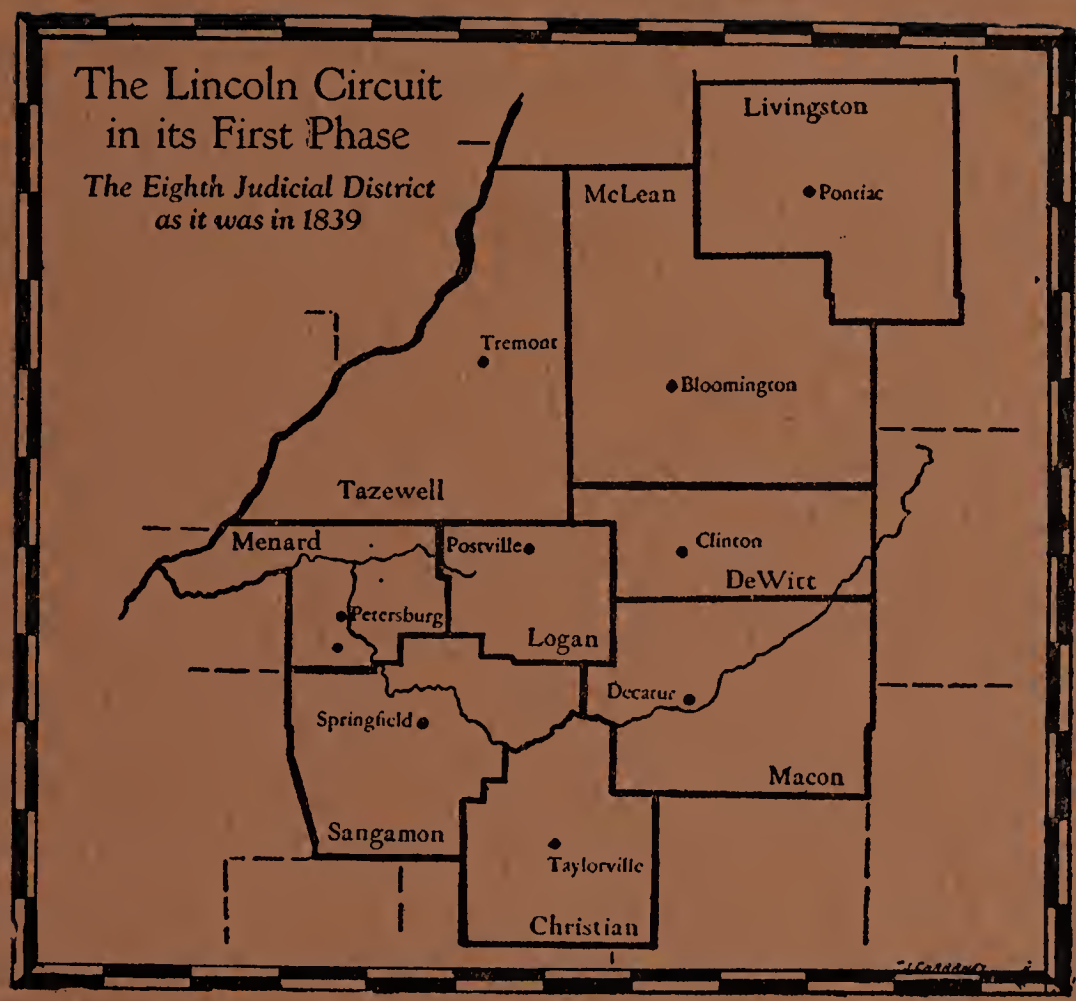
COUNTY SEAT

By Blaine Brooks Gernon

Court's in session, and its lawn
Is filled with people, all day long;
Talking, talking, arguing,
Greatest debate ever seen;
Politicians, litigants,
Lawyers, jurors, partisans,
There is Lincoln, lank and long,
Hear the laughter of his song,
Years and time shall not erase
His great heart and tender face;
Court's in session? Let it wait!
Lincoln's speaking— Let's be late